(c) Village-wise provision of sanitary latrines and tap water is not monitored at the Central Government level.

Medicinal and Aromatic Plants in Himachal Pradesh

743. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Himachal Pradesh is rich in medicinal and aromatic plants;

(b) whether it is also a fact that many of them are on the verge of extinction and some have already become extinct;

(c) if so, whether H.P. in cooperation with C.S.I.R. have formulated any plan for their revival and regeneration;

(d) whether the Central Government have explored their potential in foreign countries; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken by Government to ensure their growth and exports ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Some plant species like viola serpens, aconitum deinorrhizum, dioscorea deltoidea, jurinea macrocephala have become rare due to over-exploitation.

(c) CSIR Complex, Palampur, a constituent laboratory of CSIR, has been making efforts for the propagation of selected medicinal and aromatic plants of high value, such as tagetes minuta, heracleum candicans, picrohiza kurroa and taxus baccata.

(d) and (e) The aromatic oils of some of these plants have export potential. Some steps in promoting this activity have been initiated in collaboration with local growers and perfumeries.

744. [Transferred to 4th December 1992]

Acquisition of Genetic Engineering Technology

745. SHRI S. MADHAVAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to acquire genetic engineering technology to produce transgenic cotton plants that will resist pests from the U.S. Company which has developed this technology; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Department of Biotechnology, through an Inter-Ministerial Negotiation Team, is negotiating with M/s MONSANTO INC., USA for obtaining the technology package for production insect resistant transgenic cotton plant varieties.

Study on Collision between the Earth and a Comet

746. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the forecast made by Australian scientists of a collision between the Earth and a comet on 14th August, 2116 AD as reported in The Times of India dated the 28th October, 1992; and

(b) whether Indian scientists have varified these findings, if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The likely collision of the comet with the earth as forecast by the Australian scientist is rather uncertain at present. Accurate predictions are possible only after knowing the result of monitoring of the position of the comet to be done globally for the next few years. Scientists from Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore, are involved in observing this object.

CSIR Projects affected by shortage of Funds

747. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA :
DR. SANJAYA SINH :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item published in the Economic Times dated 22-9-92 captioned "CSIR Projects hit by shortage of funds";

(b) if so, whether the research projects in laboratories of CSIR have been badly affected due to the shortage of funds; and

(c) if so, the extent of deficiency of funds in each of the affected research projects and the remedial steps Government propose to take in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. An exercise has been undertaken to reorient the programmes and projects in CSIR to make them more user oriented and of value to society. Government is making special efforts to fund such projects and to facilitate interaction of CSIR with the industry for generting extra-budgetary support.

12.00 NOON

[The Deputy Chairman in the Chair]

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN : Madam,...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Let us first finish the little business which we do and then I will identify you. Please sit down.

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER

Correcting the reply given in the Rajya Sabha on the 10th August, 1992 to unstarred Question 2594 regarding vacant posts in ISS Grades

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI SUKH RAM): I beg to lay on the Table a statement (in English and Hindi) correcting the reply given in the Rajya Sabha on the 10th August, 1992 to Unstarred Question 3594 regarding vacant posts in ISS Grades. [Placed in Library. *See* No. LT-2732/92].

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

I. Report and Accounts (1991-92 of the Indian Petro-chemicals Corporation Limited, Vadodara and related papers

II. Report and Accounts (1991-92) of the Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited, New Delhi and related papers

III. Report and Accounts (1991-92) of the Indian Farmers Fertilizers Cooperative Limited, New Delhi and related papers.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI CHINTA MOHAN) : Madam, I lay on the Table—

I. A copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following papers, under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956 :—

(i) Twenty-third Annual Report and Accounts of the Indian Petrochemicals Corporation Limited, Vadodara, for the year 1991-92, together with the Auditors' Report on the Accounts